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THE ADVOCATE OF PEACE.

ON EARTH PEACE. . . . NATION SHALL NOT LIFT UP SWORD AGAINST NATION, NEITHER SHALL THEY LEARN WAR ANY MORE.

NEW SERIES.

BOSTON, MAY, 1869.

No. 5.

DEMORALIZATION INSEPARABLE FROM WAR.

Every reader of our public journals must have observed the terrible increase of crime since the disbandment of our late armies. Never before has there been such constant recurrence of arson, burglary, highway robbery, murder, and suicide, both North and South. In some parts of the country magistrates are powerless, because no one dare be prosecutor or witness, or honest jurymen, while all around them men are committing, singly and in bands, every species of outrage. This our experience is but a repetition of the facts of history. Thus it has ever been at the close of a war.

Why is it so? Plainly because war demoralizes all ranks of society, and especially soldiers. An army is a school of vice, where even robust virtue succumbs to temptations. To the soldier's conscience is almost useless. He *must* rob, ravage, or kill, as he is ordered; and retaliation, revenge, and indifference to suffering, are military excellencies. He is taught and trained to killing as *smart*; and, if an officer, he studies these as *sciences*. The following extract from the "LONDON TIMES" gives no exaggerated picture of military severity. It is an extract from "orders" issued by a Russian marshal. "If sufficient cattle or horses cannot be found to draw the wagons, harness the peasants. Take as many, both men and women, to carry forage for the artillery as may be needed; and load each with as many pounds as they can bear." The soldier commits acts which in time of peace would consign him to infamy or the gallows, and for doing so is applauded as a hero. In a word, *the military code is the reverse of the code of the Christian*.

Nor are disbanded soldiers the only class which multiplies crime. War robs of employment many who stay at home, as well as suspends the productive labors of the soldiers. Hence distress and high prices combine to drive men to desperate shifts. Moreover, during the contest, especially if a civil war, grudges, feuds, and hatreds, grow up and yield their bitter fruits. What an evidence of this have we this day all over the South! Take a single fact from a late Texas newspaper: "There have above 900 murders committed in this State, since the close of the war. More than 800 of them by white persons, the remainder by blacks. The state of affairs has been most fearful."

War corrupts Christians themselves. They share the general hostility. They assemble in their churches to

sing praises, and give thanks for great victories which sent death to hosts of men unprepared to meet God; and consigned to desolation, and perhaps destitution, their homes. They can read with satisfaction of *sacked towns*, and desolated districts. Can Christian graces co-exist with such complacency for slaughter and suffering?

The only thing which keeps up acquiescence in war, is *custom*. This it is which educates the nations to resort to arms in the preposterous expectation of settling their disputes. Now, we see both individuals and nations change their customs. Many customs, once common among our ourselves, have been abolished, such as wearing swords, drinking toasts, duelling, and the like. The "custom of war" can be abolished. Increased civilization, would in time abolish it; Christianity contains principles which forbid it, and common sense points to better ways of ending disputes. Interests of all sorts are against it. Let but the enlightened rouse themselves to the work of reformation. Let them give a share of their charities to support agents and lecturers, and distribute tracts. Let pastors preach peace. Let all Christians pray for peace. Let us bring the subject before our Sunday schools and Bible classes. This generation need not pass away till a court of nations, or some other peaceful expedient, shall supersede all war.

WHAT ARE WE COMING TO? — Every one who keeps his eyes open to the signs of the times must be impressed with the fearful tendencies to demoralization that are everywhere manifest. There seems to be a general relaxation of wholesome restraints, a deterioration of manly character, a disposition on all sides to run into almost every form of excess. In the pursuit of wealth, of fashion, of pleasure, of amusement, everywhere except in a strict adherence to the old time-honored principles of Christian virtue and morality, the intemperate spirit of the age is only too clearly seen. The simple integrity, the straightforward, sober industry in one's occupation, the patient waiting for success, and the calm content with the more moderate enjoyments of life that once characterized our people, seem to have been lost with a generation or two gone by, and in their stead there have come into play a system of sharp practice, a style of fitful and galvanic energy, a feverish eagerness for the sudden acquisition of wealth and distinction in society, and a restless and insatiable craving for new and more costly pleasures, which are as detrimental to long life, true happiness and real dignity, as they are to the preservation of "a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men." — *Chr. Intelligencer*.